

## HUNNEWELL FIELD

Hunnewell Field, made up of over 35 acres, lies in the center of Wellesley. Eighteen of these acres were deeded to the Town around the turn of the century by Horatio Hollis Hunnewell, who was concerned with the provision of play areas for children. Over the years, the park was expanded through the donation of adjacent parcels until almost 60 acres of land was assembled. Despite changes that occurred on the land, it continues to serve its original purpose and as the major recreation area in Wellesley.

Until the late 1940's, the potential for this park was undeveloped. When the Wellesley (Gamaliel Bradford) Senior High School was built on part of the 60 acres by the Federal Public Works Administration, it was recognized that this land should be utilized. Not only could the field serve the high school students, but it was an excellent recreational opportunity for the residents of the Town as well. The Park and Recreation Commission established some facilities in a piecemeal manner - a football field, a few tennis courts, and a baseball diamond - but it lacked the funding for a large scale development of the site. Finally, in 1948, the Commission was given the authority to hire a consulting firm to plan an expansion of the facilities.

As a result of this work, several changes were made. Smith Street was extended to connect with Rice and Paine Streets in order to create a new entrance to the school and better access to the playing fields. The tennis courts were doubled in number and playing fields and baseball diamonds were added. State Street Pond, which had been used for ice hockey was enlarged and converted to an adult skating rink.

In 1978, the State Street Pond was dredged and cleaned out again. In conjunction with this project, an irrigation system for the field was installed the following year. The irrigation water comes from the pond and the system covers the entire field between the Aqueduct and State Street. At that time also, a grounds-keeper's shed was included in the irrigation pumphouse so two people could work out of this shed all summer long.

Hunnewell Field has also been the focus of several innovative and award winning maintenance ideas. For example: assigning two groundskeepers to this park has cut back on maintenance manpower by 1/3; steel goal posts replace the vandalized wooden posts; a trailer-portable stage was built to replace the construction of a temporary stage used for graduation ceremonies; the use of pond water instead of Wellesley drinking water to irrigate the fields; and the use of herbicide or growth retardant in the athletic field marking paint reduces ballfield marking from every other game to every other week.

Adjacent to the State Street Pond is Memorial Grove. In May, 1919, over 300 trees were planted here to commemorate the men of the Town who had fought in World War I. In addition, five English Elms were planted for the five men who were killed in the war. The Elms have since died but many of the trees that were planted in the grove remain today.

A lot has changed at Hunnewell Field since H. H. Hunnewell first envisioned the playground here. However, his original concept and the 1948 concept plan remain basically intact. Neither plan could begin to consider the intensity of use that the field provides today. It serves the residents of Wellesley very well.